
The United States Navy on the World Wide Web
A service of the Navy Office of Information, Washington DC
send feedback/questions to comments@chinfo.navy.mil
The United States Navy web site is found on the Internet at
<http://www.navy.mil>

Navy & Marine Corps Medical News

MN-98-27

July 10, 1998

This service distributes news and information to Sailors and Marines, their families, civilian employees, and retired Navy and Marine Corps families. Further dissemination of this email is encouraged.

-USN-

Contents for this week's MEDNEWS:

Headline: Vincennes selected for "GREEN H" wellness award

Headline: Jacksonville surgeons increase productivity

Headline: Dental Corps officer will lead medical effort in Haiti

Headline: Reunion yields a lifetime of memories

Headline: Disease and decay under attack during "Infinite Moonlight"

Headline: NEPMU-7 supports Jordanian exercise

Headline: Department of Defense and Cancer Institute continue treatment trials

Headline: TRICARE question and answer

Headline: Healthwatch: Practicing food safety is a constant routine

-USN-

Headline: Vincennes selected for "GREEN H" wellness award

By LT A.L. Hobbs, USN, USS Vincennes

YOKOSUKA--To recognize the ship's efforts in taking care of its own, Commander, Naval Surface Force, Pacific has awarded a wellness award for 1997 to USS Vincennes (CG 49). The Green "H" painted on the ship's port and starboard superstructure for a year symbolizes this award.

Chief Hospital Corpsman Geano C. Chambers, of Chicago, Ill.; Hospital Corpsman Third Class Donald P. Highley of Winfield, West Virginia; and Hospitalman Shawn K. West of Atlanta, Georgia, have been the driving force behind crew wellness improvements. Chambers and his staff developed a smoking cessation program, submitted daily health notes for the plan of the day, conducted cardiopulmonary resuscitation and medical training for all personnel, and improved the overall quality and quantity of healthy foods available. The smoking cessation program and healthy foods initiative are the two most visible and productive programs. Vincennes has been aggressively placing notes in the plan of the day describing the long-term effects of smoking. Chambers worked with the ship's store to increase the amount of healthy snacks sold, and he worked with the galley to improve the amount of fresh fruits and salads available at every meal.

Mess management specialists have contributed to the

healthy food initiative by modifying daily menus to include a calorie count for each portion. A Sailor can now select foods that contribute to a recommended daily calorie intake.

The wellness award shows the efforts Vincennes has made toward improving the overall health of the crew. Chambers praised the crew for its participation in these wellness programs.

" I hope each Sailor recognizes the importance of taking care of the body and mind," he said. "Without proper maintenance, we cannot function at the high standards required of us on a daily basis."

-USN-

Headline: Jacksonville surgeons increase productivity

By Teresa D. White, Naval Hospital, Jacksonville

JACKSONVILLE--Naval Hospital Jacksonville recently opened a new Dictation Suite for its surgeons, as a solution to the challenge of excessive downtime in the operating room.

The suite is designed as a work place for surgeons, while the surgical support staff prepares the operating room (OR) for the next case. In the past, there was no space for surgeons in the vicinity of the OR; so to be productive they would return to their office or clinic located in a separate area of the hospital. When the OR was prepared for the next case, the surgical team would have to locate the surgeon.

The new suite is located close to the OR and it has dictating equipment, telephones and Composite Health Care System (CHCS) terminals, which increase each surgeon's productivity during their wait.

As a result of the new dictation suite, there has been a significant decrease in turnaround time, an increase in productivity and surgeons are now readily available, making the process favorable for both staff and patients.

Lieutenant Commander Tom Delaney, MC, operating room department head, said that having the new suite is a win/win situation.

"By having the surgeons close by, there is basically no downtime, which is also a plus for the patient who is probably anxious about surgery," he said.

-USN-

Headline: Dental Corps officer will lead medical effort in Haiti

By Earl W. Hicks, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

WASHINGTON--When Navy dentist CDR Steve Clarke deploys to the Republic of Haiti, he will leave behind his duties with the 2nd Dental Battalion at Camp Lejeune and begin a new assignment as Commander Medical Task Force, United States Support Group-Haiti (USSPTGP-Haiti).

The 55-person group comprising physicians, dentists, nurses, medical service corps officers, physician's assistants, corpsmen and dental technicians from Naval Medical Centers Portsmouth and San Diego, as well as the 2nd Force Service Support Group from Camp Lejeune will

support USSPTGP-Haiti, a joint service organization under the U.S. Southern Command.

"This is a superb example of global sourcing of health care providers to accomplish a mission," Clarke said.

While in Haiti, the medical task force will provide medical and dental care to American and United Nations forces as well as American embassy staff in support of Operations Uphold Democracy and New Horizons.

Clarke recently returned from a five-day site visit to Haiti to accomplish preliminary planning for the coming mission.

"Our job is to provide optimal health care while demonstrating both what is best about the Navy and the professionalism of its people," he said. "We are trained and eager to meet any challenge."

-USN-

Headline: Reunion yields a lifetime of memories
By JO2 Robert Alan Wright, Naval Air Forces Pacific

SAN DIEGO--The San Diego Naval Medical Center holds an annual neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) reunion for military kids who have survived major medical problems when they were born. For a few hours on a recent Saturday, volunteers at the center, which treats an average of 600 kids annually, hosted a party honoring the special children. The San Diego Armed Services YMCA sponsored the event.

The youngsters came from all over the country. Some traveled great distances. The one-day special event treated children to entertainment, activities, food, and prizes. Graduate awards were presented for the longest stay, the greatest distance traveled, and the smallest graduate.

According to event organizer Debbie Hansen, who is with the San Diego Armed Services YMCA and is a mother of an NICU graduate, "The reunion is a sign of hope because these families endured a lot of pain and struggles when their child was hospitalized. For years you get to see kids who have been terribly sick. Now you see a five or six-year-old who is doing wonderfully."

Hospital staff member Beth Smith, a registered nurse, said, "This is an exciting time where relationships with children are renewed. What a morale booster; I saw a child today that I took care of eight years ago. She's doing great."

"My son Dalton spent 36 weeks and five days in the unit," said Melanie Hanson of San Diego. "This is something nice for the kids and for the military." Hanson's husband, Richard, is a Petty Officer First Class stationed at the 32nd Street Naval Station in San Diego.

"They've got all kinds of activities for the kids," said Megan Costen of San Diego, wife of Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 2 Derrick Costen. Her daughter, Amber, was also a patient.

"It's nice to see all of the other babies. They were so small in the beginning," explained Michelle Clarke, wife of

a Petty Officer First Class Dalton Clarke, stationed aboard USS Ogden (LPD-5). Their daughter, Jessica, spent a month in the NICU.

-USN-

Headline: Disease and decay under attack during "Infinite Moonlight"

By JOC (SW) Jim Deangio, USS Tarawa (LHA 1)

AGABA, JORDON--While combat elements were staging war games in the field, medical personnel from the TARAWA Amphibious Ready Group recently waged war on disease and decay, completing a Medical And Dental Civic Action Program (MEDCAP/ DENCAP) with the Royal Jordanian Armed Forces.

For ten days, medical personnel from Fleet Surgical Team Five and the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) set up shop in three small villages here as part of Exercise Infinite Moonlight '98.

At the invitation of local authorities, several doctors and dentists, Hospital Corpsmen and Dental Technicians took turns assisting Jordanians as they went town to town inoculating children in several schools, providing whole family blood work, check-ups, and dental assistance.

"We were working hand in hand with the Jordanians; drawing blood and giving immunizations, and helping out with X-rays," explained Hospital Corpsman Second Class Justin Ross, 23, of Petaluma, Calif.

"We showed them that we aren't just some military force coming into their country to train on their ranges," he said.

"I've learned a lot about the Jordanian people, their culture and their country," said Hospital Corpsman Third Class Art Medina, of Vista, Calif. "I consider it an honor to be chosen to come out here and do this."

So how do the two countries' medical services stack up? "It's the same; medical is medical," said Hospital Corpsman Third Class and Miami native Jerome Harding. "The Jordanians are very knowledgeable in what they are doing."

"Our goal was to work as a group, to practice teamwork and to introduce each other to the ways we do business," said Dr. Mohammed al-Bataineh, a Royal Jordanian Army dentist who also works at the King Hussein Medical Center in Amman, the nation's capital.

"We have the same ways of treating a patient," he said. "Mostly everything was the same. This was my second time working with the Americans. It has been good. "Hopefully, I have made some new friends and improved relations."

-USN-

Headline: NEPMU-7 supports Jordanian exercise

By: ENS Daron Patton, MSC, Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit-7

AGABA, JORDON--U.S. Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit Seven (NEPMU-7) recently deployed a five-member team to provide preventive medicine and occupational

health support to a medical civil action program during Exercise "Infinite Moonlight" in Jordan. The team consisted of a preventive medicine physician, an industrial hygiene officer, an environmental health officer, a preventive medicine technician and an advanced laboratory technician. They augmented the clinical medicine members of Fifth Fleet Surgical Team from the USS TARAWA Amphibious Readiness Group.

NEPMU-7 conducted exhaustive environmental and occupational health characterizations of three small rural communities in southern Jordan. The team sampled air, soil, and water, collected insect specimens and assessed the presence of industries in the region. NEPMU-7 also conferred with local physicians and government officials to exchange information on infectious disease control and proper treatment of water, wastewater and solid wastes.

NEPMU-7 members got to interact with their Jordanian Army counterparts and learned to appreciate different methods of keeping military personnel healthy. A technique the Jordanian Army uses is requiring all military galleys to maintain a sample of food from each meal served for at least 24 hours. This allows Jordanian Army medical personnel to have a ready sample to examine if a suspected outbreak of food-borne illness occurs.

The two-week exercise culminated at the King Hussein Medical Center in Amman, Jordan, where NEPMU-7 staff presented a lecture on biological statistics to Jordanian Army physicians.

-USN-

Headline: Department of Defense and Cancer Institute
continue treatment trials
By Douglas J. Gillert, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON--A continuing agreement between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) allows TRICARE-eligible patients access to the latest cancer therapies at more than 2,000 sites around the country.

Under the demonstration project that began in 1996, TRICARE-eligible patients who meet clinical criteria can have their treatment covered while they participate in research studies designed to find better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer.

An earlier demonstration, begun in 1994, covered treatment for only breast cancer under NCI-sponsored Phase III clinical trials. When DoD and NCI entered into a new cancer trial partnership in 1996, the demonstration expanded to include other cancers and Phase II and Phase III trials.

Phase I trials are the first step in testing a new treatment in humans. In these studies, researchers look for the best way to give a new treatment -- for example, by mouth, intravenous drip or injection, and how many times a day. They also try to find out if and how the treatment can be given safely and they watch for any harmful side effects.

Because less is known about the possible risks and benefits in Phase I, these studies usually include only a limited number of patients who would not be helped by other known treatments.

Phase II trials focus on learning whether the new treatment has an anti-cancer effect: Does it shrink a tumor or improve blood test results? As in Phase I, only a small number of people take part because of the risks and unknowns involved.

Phase III trials compare the results of people taking the new treatment with results of people taking standard treatment: Which group has better survival rates and fewer side effects. In most cases, studies move into Phase III testing only after a treatment shows promise in Phases I and II. Phase III trials may include hundreds of people around the country.

TRICARE patients who want to participate in these trials must first have approval from their regional managed care support contractor. Check with the local TRICARE Service Center or the health benefits adviser at the nearest military medical facility for assistance.

Patients and physicians can learn more about choosing clinical trials from PDQ, the NCI's database, which contains a large registry of clinical trials and directories of physicians and organizations providing cancer care. The database also includes summaries for health professionals and patients on cancer treatment, screening, prevention and supportive care.

The NCI's Cancer Information Service provides the latest, most accurate cancer information for patients, families, health care professionals and the public. The Cancer Information Service can use the PDQ database to find cancer clinical trials covered by the DoD/NCI demonstration project. The information service, including the PDQ database, are located on the Internet at <http://cancernet.nci.nih.gov/trials>. This site also provides links to other National Cancer Institute sites on the Internet.

Patients and physicians can reach the Cancer Information Service by calling (800) 422-6237. People with TTY equipment for the hearing impaired should call (800) 332-8615. Health care professionals can reach the PDQ search service to locate clinical trials, cancer physicians or organizations by calling (800) 345-3300.

For more information on TRICARE, visit DoD's Web site at www.ha.osd.mil.

-USN-

Headline: TRICARE question and answer

Question: Who has to pay a TRICARE enrollment fee?

Answer: Active duty and their family members do not pay a TRICARE enrollment fee. The enrollment fee is required for retirees, their family members and survivors, and eligible

former spouses. The cost is \$230 per single family member or \$460 for two or more family members. The fee for eligible former spouses is \$230. Enrollment fees can be paid in full at the time of enrollment, or in four (4) quarterly installments.

-USN-

Headline: Healthwatch: Practicing food safety is a constant routine

By Leigh Schuyler Houck, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda

BETHESDA, Md.--Over the past several years there have been serious outbreaks of bacteria-related food-borne illnesses.

Who can forget the undercooked hamburgers contaminated with E. Coli at a well-known fast food restaurant, which caused three children to die and hundreds of people to get sick. What about the 250,000 individuals who became ill from eating ice cream contaminated with salmonella in 1994? Locally, we remember the infamous church supper last summer that resulted in two deaths and 700 illnesses related to ham stuffed with tainted greens.

It seems as if everything we eat is susceptible. But why now? Several trends are emerging. One is that the bad food bugs have evolved into new, more problematic and resistant strains and have become more widespread due to modern agricultural methods. Agricultural operations are more centralized meaning they are larger and that the opportunity for contamination increases accordingly.

We also have a growing population of susceptible people. Typically, infants, young children, the elderly and the immune suppressed are most susceptible to becoming ill from contaminated food. If you are in one of these groups, then one in four chickens has enough salmonella to make you sick if not prepared properly.

In addition, we now import 30 billion tons of food a year, so we can buy it cheaply and have foods available all year that were once available only seasonally. Associated with these imports can be bacteria and contaminants crossing international borders and making us sick.

What can you do at home to continue to enjoy food and remain healthy?

The Partnership for Food Safety Education, a group formed to teach Americans about food safety, has developed the "Fight BAC" four-step program to help address this issue.

- Clean and wash hands and surfaces often. Use hot, soapy water before and after food preparation, bathroom use, changing diapers and handling pets. Also wash fruits and vegetables under cool running water. Don't assume that packaged salad mixes and veggies have been pre-washed.

- Separate - Don't cross contaminate. Keep raw poultry, meat and seafood and their juices away from other foods. Store these items on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so the juices don't drip onto other foods.

Never place cooked meat on a platter that held raw meat without washing in between.

- Cook to proper temperatures. Use a meat thermometer to ensure meat is cooked all the way through. Cook poultry to 180 degrees, roasts and steaks to 145 degrees and ground meats to 160 degrees. Cook eggs till firm, not runny, and fish until opaque and flaking easily with a fork. It is best to cook stuffings and meats separately.

- Chill/refrigerate promptly. Cold temperatures keep the most harmful contaminants from multiplying as rapidly. Refrigerate or freeze perishables, fruits and vegetables, prepared foods and leftovers within two hours. Don't defrost foods on the kitchen counter - use the refrigerator or place under cool, running water, or use the microwave oven's defrost setting. Divide large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator. If you must cook stuffed meat, unstuff it and refrigerate in separate containers.

-USN-

Comments about and ideas for MEDNEWS are welcome. Story submissions are encouraged. Contact MEDNEWS editor, Earl Hicks, at email: mednews@us.med.navy.mil; Telephone 202/762-3223, (DSN) 762-3223, or fax 202/762-3224.

-USN-

-USN-